DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 013 FL 019 590

AUTHOR Stickels, Leslie; Schwartz, Marsha
TITLE Memory Hooks: Clues for Language Retention.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 10p.; In: Planning for Proficiency. Dimension: Language '86. Report of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, p65-73, 1987; see FL 019 583.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjectives; Classroom Techniques; High Schools; *Mnemonics; Negative Forms (Language); *Pronouns; Retention (Psychology); Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Spanish; Tenses (Grammar); *Verbs; *Vocabulary Development

ABSTRACT

Memory-assisting devices used in high school Spanish instruction are described, including strategies in many forms: visuals, sounds, rhythms, rhymes, and actions. Mnemonics for subjunctives include: a suffix-"switching" procedure; a word ("dishes") to remind them of the six verbs not using the first person to form the present subjunctive; a cheerleading activity to retain past subjunctive forms; a word ("wedding") for remembering the functions of verbs and impersonal expressions determining subjunctive use in noun clauses; and three categories with adverbial conjunctions, each with a mnemonic acronym. The formation of conjugations of stem-changing verbs is illustrated with a shoe- or L-shaped box. Uses of "ser" and "estar" are remembered with a brief saying. Perfect tenses are illustrated in several simple ways. The distinctions between preterite and imperfect forms also uses a mnemonic acronym. Negatives are taught using silly sayings, and object pronouns are illustrated with song and dance and another acronym. For demonstrative adjectives, a rhyme is used, and silly phrases assist with vocabulary retention. The devices have been found to be effective tools for language learning and for adding humor to the class. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Gartner
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED337013

7

Memory Hooks: Clues For Language Retention

Leslie Stickels and Marsha Schwartz
Lyons Township High School
La Grange, IL

When students at the beginning of the year explain why they are taking Spanish, many of them say that they heard it was easy. However, if the same students are asked later in the year if they found it to be so, they most likely say no. The vocabulary, the subjunctive, the demonstratives, and the uses of *ser* and *estar* are but some of the mysteries of the language that are often difficult for students to master.

In order to help our students remember these difficult concepts, we have devised several memory hooks to facilitate recall and retention of the material. These strategies that on many forms: visuals, sounds, rhythms, rhymes, or even actions. In order to use some of these mnemonic or memory-assisting devices, you as the teacher may have to act a little crazy, but you will find that your antics will be remembered forever. In this paper we describe several memory hooks that we have found to be effective with class after class.

The Subjunctive

Let's start with one of the most difficult areas for students: the subjunctive mood. We know that to form it, we tell our students to begin with the first person present, take off the "o" and replace it with the opposite vowel or "switch" the ending. Therefore:

"S" for switch and "S" for subjunctive.

After students have learned the regular forms, what about the irregulars? There are six verbs that cannot use the first person to form the present subjunctive. So we teach them to remember **DISHES.**

FL019590

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dar ..... dé
Ir ..... vaya
Ser ..... sea
Haber ..... haya
Estar ..... esté
Saber ..... sepa

(In your kitchen, you probably have an unmatched set of dishes, which is a set of irregulars, just as in the subjunctive.)

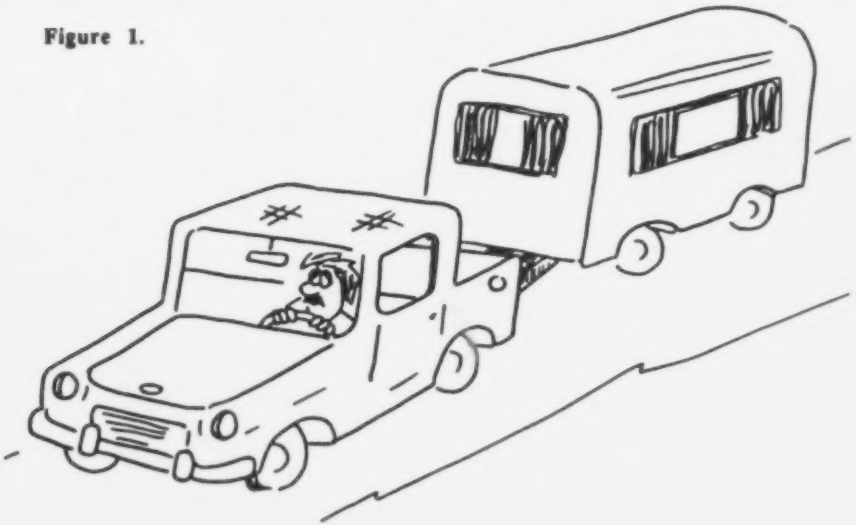
Now let's move on to the past subjunctive and the cheerleading forms. We begin with the third person of the preterite tense of the verb. Remove the *ron* and add the endings.

trabaja*ra*	**trabajá*ramos***
trabaja*ras*	**trabaja*rais***
trabaja*ra*	**trabaja*ran***

(Motions may be added to the true cheerleading effect.)

After the students have successfully learned the forms of the subjunctive, they must learn the many uses. Noun clauses can be taught by using an illustration of a car (the independent clause), a hitch (que), and a trailer (the dependent clause).

Figure 1.



If we add a lady to the car and a "Just Married" sign to the hood, this will lead us to the verbs and impersonal expressions that determine the use of the subjunctive in noun clauses. We use the word **WEDDING,** which one of our colleagues invented.

W — verbs of wanting or wishing
E — verbs of emotion
D — doubt or disbelief
D — denial
I — impersonal expressions (which overlap into other areas)
N — negation
G — grief or God (ojala is an if only)

Now let's go on to adverbial clauses. We have divided the adverbial conjunctions into three categories. The first category, or ESCAPA, shows conjunctions which always cause the subjunctive. The second category deals with LATCHED, or conjunctions which take the subjunctive only when indefinite future time or uncertainty is implied. The third category, or MA, includes the conjunctions which can use subjunctive or indicative depending upon the speaker's intent.

Figure 2. Conjunctions that ALWAYS require the subjunctive.

MAIN CLAUSE	CONJUNCTIONS		DEPENDENT CLAUSE
ANY TENSE	E — en caso de que	(in case that)	SUBJUNCTIVE
	S — sin que	(without)	
	C — con tal que	(provided that)	
	A — antes de que	(before)	
	P — para que	(in order that, so that)	
	A — a menos que	(unless)	

Figure 3. Conjunctions that take the subjunctive ONLY when the indefinite future time or uncertainty is implied. They will NOT be used with the past subjunctive.

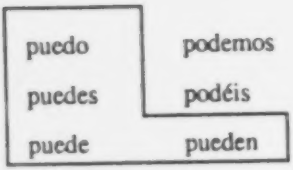
MAIN CLAUSE	CONJUNCTIONS		DEPENDENT CLAUSE
PRESENT	L — luego que	(as soon as)	INDICATIVE — to show certainty or habitual action
	A — así que	(as soon as)	
	T — tan pronto como	(as soon as)	
	C — cuando	(when)	SUBJUNCTIVE — to show uncertainty
	H — hasta que	(until)	
FUTURE, COMMANDS	E — en cuanto	(as soon as)	SUBJUNCTIVE
	D — después de que	(after)	
ALL OTHER TENSES			INDICATIVE

Figure 4. Conjunctions that can be used with the subjunctive or indicative, depending on the meaning the speaker/writer wishes to convey. Using indicative will indicate certainty, while subjunctive will indicate uncertainty.

MAIN CLAUSE	CONJUNCTIONS		DEPENDENT CLAUSE
ALL TENSES	M — mientras (que)	(while)	INDICATIVE — certainty
	A — aunque	(although)	SUBJUNCTIVE — uncertainty

Stem-changing verbs

Verbs have always been a problem for many students. One area of difficulty is stem-changing verbs. Since the stems change in all persons but *nosotros* and *vosotros* in the present tense, we can use a shoe or an "L" to illustrate.



Some verbs need an "a" before an infinitive and can be demonstrated by putting **BLT with Mayo** on the board or the overhead. These are verbs of Beginning (comenzar, empezar), Learning (aprender), Teaching (enseñar), and verbs of Motion (ir, venir.)

Ser and Estar

The uses of *ser* and *estar* are frequently difficult to remember. Since *estar* has fewer uses, it is easier to teach these first. A memory hook for first year classes might be, "How you feel and where you are always take the verb *estar*." Then, if you instruct the students to use *ser* in the other examples, they will have a basic comprehension of the two verbs. Other uses can later be added to this basic definition of *estar*.

Students often mix the present and the past participle. If you immediately teach the present participle as an "ndo" form, the two participles will not be confused.

Perfect tenses

The perfect tenses can be illustrated in several ways. Since forms of the verb *haber* plus the past participle are used, it is easiest to refer to the perfect tenses as the **H-DO** forms.

When conjugating the present perfect, if we look at the second person singular *has*, we can explain that the translation is *has* or have.

he	**hemos**
has	**habéis**
ha	**han**

The past perfect tense can be translated by reversing the "b" of *había* to *had*.

hab ía ..... had

Preterite and Imperfect

Students always find the differences between the preterite and the imperfect among the most difficult concepts in Spanish to understand. The imperfect forms cause few problems and the preterite irregular forms are just a matter of memorizing, but the application is a definite problem. When we teach the uses of the imperfect, we can help our students **DUWIT.**

D — description
U — used to
W — was, were, + ing
I — inside things (mental actions like saber, creer)
T — tener expressions and time.

For the most part, all other examples would fall into the preterite category.

Negatives

Teaching negatives can be a positive thing if you use a little imagination. *Nada* or nothing can be taught as "not a thing." *Algo* or something is "I'll go to the story for something." *Nadie* or no one refers to people and "nobody but people can yeah." (Boo! Hiss! You say? Just wait until you hear the giggles when the students remember these "groaners" during chapter tests.

Object pronouns

After the subjunctive and the preterite/imperfect, the object pronouns run a close third for most despised concept. How can one ever keep all of these pronouns separated? Maybe some memory hooks would help.

1. Objects of prepositions. Many of these pronouns borrow forms from the Spanish subject pronouns. The only two different forms exist in the first and second person singular. To help students remember:
   "Ti for tú and Mi for yo"

(Sing to the tune of "Tea for Two." A straw hat and cane are musts for this musical presentation.)

2. Direct and indirect objects. The first and second persons singular and plural share the same words in this category. But how does one remember that "lo, la" takes the place of a direct object while "le" is an indirect object pronoun? Possibly a chorus of "Lola" would help solve this problem. After learning the pronoun forms, the student must learn the word order. ¡Caray! What comes first? Wouldn't students love to get **RID** of pronouns?

Reflexive
Indirect
Direct

Thus we find a hookup to pronoun word order.

Demonstrative adjectives

Demonstrative adjectives can be painless if taught with the following rhyme:

This and these have the T's
That and those "no, no, no."

This rhyme is quick and easy, but it serves an important purpose—it distinguishes distance.

Vocabulary

Memory hooks are very important in the teaching of grammar. As we have seen, a silly phrase can help us to determine word order, or select an appropriate verb tense.

This same tactic will help increase vocabulary retention. Let's look at some different categories of words and determine which approach might be most appropriate.

1. Cognates.
   Every textbook or magazine has an abundance of cognates. We all spot "ceremonia, violencia, filmar, historia" and tend

to spend less time drilling because of the English-Spanish similarity. However, we must actively teach students to spot these words. We must encourage them to guess at meanings.

2. Inside clues.
   Sometimes English or Spanish clues are inside the vocabulary word in question. Therefore, "inside" memory hooks can help to improve retention.
   A) *pie* in *pie*rna (foot at the end of the leg)
   B) res*fria*do (one should rest when one has a cold)
   frío
   C) de*bajo* (short people can go "under" things)
3. Association words.
   Although there might not be a Spanish clue to meaning inside of these words, a teacher can bring them alive with just a little creativity.
   A) garganta — gargle
   B) mirar — look at oneself in the mirror
   C) vender — vending machines or vendors sell things.
   When first drilling this vocabulary, practice the memory hook along with the particular item.
4. First letter/initial sound.
   Overemphasizing a sound in the English translation can help students remember the Spanish.
   durante ——— durrrrring.
   The difference between *ustedes* and *ellos* seems to be a constant source of frustration.
   ***ustedes* begins with the letter "u"**
   It means *you*.
5. Rhythms.
   Different rhythms can be used in the teaching of vocabulary. When repeating a certain expression, one can create a hand-clapping, foot-stomping rhythm.
   darse cuenta de
   dar — se quen — ta de
   Often, only the rhythm needs to be presented to trigger recall of that particular vocabulary item.

6. Nonsense clues.
   Probably the most interesting, nonense clues are often the most lasting of memory hooks. Pick a word, any word, and invent a clue.
   sin embargo — It might be a *sin*, but *nevertheless*, in the *bar* we *go*.
   cuidad — Every morning Dad leaves to go to work in the *city*. I say to him, *"ci u dad.* ("See you, *Dad.")*

Groan! Groan! We agree, but we accept the groans as long as the vocabulary item is recalled.

In conclusion, as high school Spanish teachers, we have found these devices to be very effective tools in language learning. They help students retain grammatical concepts, verb conjugations and uses, and vocabulary items. These memory hooks, whether thought out in advance or spontaneously invented, add humor to the class. The teacher is "real" and the class focuses closely on what "silly" thing will be used next. Using memory devices in the classroom encourages the students to create and share their own memory clues. The development of this type of study skill will always be beneficial. Thus, in both language-specific and overall study skills, we have helped our students immensely.